

deco-style theater with its live productions, and their work has not gone unnoticed. Aside from the crowded audiences, the Fox Theater has awarded grants to the Community Theater over the last 2 years to help preserve the historic Ritz Theater.

Thank you to all who perform shows, attend musicals, and preserve the wonderful theater culture in Waycross, Georgia.

FEDERAL TRIO PROGRAMS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3800, the Educational Opportunities and Success Act, the bill introduced last week by my colleague Representative WARREN DAVIDSON of Ohio.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3800 seeks to address a common, yet preventable, issue impacting students from low-income families and first-generation college students. In recent years, applicants to the Department of Education's Upward Bound program found themselves stuck in financial limbo when their grant applications were rejected due to clerical errors, some errors as insignificant as using the wrong font.

This is unacceptable. I was proud to cosponsor H.R. 3800, a bill that reauthorizes the TRIO programs for 5 additional years.

I am also proud to work with my colleagues across the aisle to support this commonsense legislation that eases the administrative burdens during the application process.

TRIO programs like Upward Bound are critical in ensuring disadvantaged students have a shot at turning the dream of a college education into a reality, and H.R. 3800 has my full support.

CONSENSUS RULE SUBVERTED

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, it has now been 6 legislative days since H.R. 553, the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act, was denied a standalone vote.

Democrat leadership subverted their own rules and prevented a vote on this bipartisan legislation, which now has 371 cosponsors, over 86 percent of the Members of the Congress.

Under new rules in this Congress, H.R. 553 qualified for the Consensus Calendar, a provision for bills to receive a standalone vote. An article published in *The Hill* stated today: "The new rule keeps top House leaders from squelching any bill that has at least 290 cosponsors, or two-thirds of the House membership."

Sadly, the Democrats did just that. They targeted and removed H.R. 553 from the Consensus Calendar.

Democrat leadership should bring this bill to the floor. The time is now to give these rightly deserved benefits to the surviving spouses of service-members and finally end the widow's tax.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GARY JOHN ALEKNAVICH ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Mr. SOTO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, tonight, I would like to honor Gary John Aleknovich and congratulate him on his upcoming retirement.

Gary John Aleknovich is a U.S. Navy veteran, labor leader, maintenance foreman, journeyman mechanic, and certified welder by trade. He has received a certificate of achievement for completing courses at the Florida International University Center for Labor Research and Studies.

After serving in the U.S. Navy from 1976 to 1979, Gary was hired by Florida Power and Light, and then went on to become an apprenticeship mechanic at the Florida Port Everglades Power Plant. In 1984, he became a journeyman mechanic at the St. Lucie Nuclear Power Plant, and later became a mechanical certified welder and a nuclear maintenance foreman.

He has held various positions within his local union of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, including treasurer, executive board member, job steward, System Council U-4 delegate, and national convention committee delegate, and served as the Florida Electrical Worker Association's vice president and executive board member.

Gary has been a member of IBEW since 1980 and even started the process to establish and train IBEW officers and members in the IBEW Code of Excellence training program. He soon became System Council U-4, assistant business manager of IBEW System Council U-4, and was later elected to serve as business manager in 2005, where he ran unopposed for four additional 3-year terms and will retire next month.

There is no question that Gary John Aleknovich has been a leader in his community and a public servant, and one of labor's strongest members.

Madam Speaker, for that, we thank him.

34TH ANNUAL PARK AND RECREATION MONTH

(Mr. WESTERMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate our Nation's parks.

This July marks the 34th annual Park and Recreation Month, a celebration highlighting the incredible opportunities and benefits that park and recreation agencies provide to their communities.

I, like many Arkansans, grew up enjoying everything that the Natural State has to offer. From hiking and hunting in its forests, to swimming, fishing, and boating on its crystal-clear lakes and rivers, outdoor recreation is an essential part of life for the families of my State. Some of my favorite memories of life were made outside in the beautiful outdoors of Arkansas, and I am blessed to still be making similar memories today.

Our park and recreation agencies are an important part of our history and offer much to the quality of our future. Theodore Roosevelt once said: "It is an incalculable added pleasure to anyone's sum of happiness if he or she grows to know, even slightly and imperfectly, how to read and enjoy the wonder-book of nature."

As a forester and lifelong lover of nature, the wonder-book of nature has always been fascinating to me, and I hope to motivate people to get out and enjoy the natural beauty around them.

In the words of the fictional sitcom character Leslie Knope, "America is awesome." I encourage everyone to go outside with friends and family to enjoy all the awesomeness our parks have to offer.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALLEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ON BEING NAMED THE DISTRICT OF DISTINCTION

(Mr. TAYLOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, today I rise to congratulate Allen Independent School District for being named a District of Distinction by District Administration Magazine.

Allen ISD serves thousands of students grades K through 12 in a rapidly growing community. In an effort to meet growing needs of the community, Allen ISD launched a STEAM Center to provide a unique learning environment to help foster an interest in STEAM amongst students. The brand-new facility offers students hands-on learning experiences ranging from indoor robotics labs to outdoor discovery gardens.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me today in congratulating Allen ISD, their staff, parents, and students for being named District of Distinction and commend them on their dedication to cultivating a passion in students for learning more about science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.